

## CLAIMS

1. A method, comprising:

receiving a command to set a fax/scan device to a “Receive Fax to PC”  
5 or “Scan-To PC” mode, wherein faxes sent or images scanned to the fax/scan  
device will be forwarded to a designated master host computing device;  
determining if a master host computing device is currently designated  
for the fax/scan device;  
if a master host computing device is currently designated for the  
10 fax/scan device, declining to set the fax/scan device to the “Receive Fax to PC”  
or “Scan-To PC” mode;  
if a master host computing device is not currently designated for the  
fax/scan device, generating a master host identifier; and  
transmitting the master host identifier to be stored on the fax/scan  
15 device, thereby setting the fax/scan device to the “Receive Fax to PC” or  
“Scan-To PC” mode.

2. The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising storing the  
master host identifier on the designated master host computing device.

20

3. The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising prompting a  
user to enter data identifying the fax/scan device.

4. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the determining if a  
25 master host computing device has already been designated for the fax/scan  
device further comprises determining if a master host identifier is stored in

memory of the fax/scan device and, if so, determining that a master host computing device has already been designated for the fax/scan device.

5        5.        The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the determining if a master host computing device has already been designated for the fax/scan device further comprises determining if a master host identifier stored in memory of the fax/scan device represents a non-zero value and, if so, determining that a master host computing device has already been designated for the fax/scan device.

10

6.        The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the generating a master host identifier further comprises generating a master host identifier that uniquely identifies the master host computing device to the fax/scan device.

15        7.        The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising generating an error message that includes an indication that a master host computing device is already designated for the fax/scan device.

20        8.        The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the fax/scan device further comprises a device selected from the following list: a fax machine; a multifunction device; a printer with fax capabilities; a scanner.

25        9.        The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the fax/scan device and the master host computing device are connected to a network or multiple direct connections.

10. A method, comprising:  
receiving a "Receive Fax to PC" or "Scan-To PC" instruction;  
entering into a "Receive Fax to PC" or "Scan-To PC" mode;  
receiving a master host identifier that uniquely identifies a master host  
5 computing device that will receive incoming faxes/scans while in "Receive Fax  
to PC" or "Scan-To PC" mode;  
storing the master host identifier;  
receiving a fax transmission or scan data; and  
transmitting the fax transmission or scan data to the master host  
10 computing device.

11. The method as recited in claim 10, wherein the storing the master  
host identifier further comprises storing the master host identifier in non-  
volatile memory.

15

12. The method as recited in claim 10, wherein the receiving a  
"Receive Fax to PC" or "Scan-To PC" instruction further comprises receiving a  
"Receive Fax to PC" or "Scan-To PC" instruction from a fax/scan device user  
interface.

20

13. The method as recited in claim 10, wherein receiving a "Receive  
Fax to PC" or "Scan-To PC" instruction further comprises receiving a "Receive  
Fax to PC" or "Scan-To PC" instruction from a network computing device.

25

14. The method as recited in claim 10, wherein:

receiving a “Receive Fax to PC” or “Scan-To PC” instruction further comprises receiving a “Receive Fax to PC” or “Scan-To PC” instruction from a fax/scan device user interface;

the method further comprises the following additional steps:

5                   receiving an identification of a computing device that is to be designated as the master host computing device; and

                  transmitting a request to the identified computing device to generate and return the master host identifier.

10           15.    The method as recited in claim 10, further comprising:

                  receiving a request from a second computing device to enter “Receive Fax to PC” or “Scan-To PC” mode and designate the second computing device as the master host computing device; and

                  transmitting an error message to the second computing device  
15           indicating that the master host identifier is already set and cannot be changed by the second computing device.

16.    A computing device, comprising:

a processor;

20           memory;

                  a fax/scan driver stored in the memory configured to communicate with a fax/scan device and set the fax/scan device to a “Receive Fax to PC” or “Scan-To PC” mode designating the computing device as a master host computing device, wherein faxes or scanned data received by the fax/scan  
25           device are transmitted to a master host computing device;

a master host identifier generator configured to uniquely identify the computing device that is the master host computing device; and

wherein the master host identifier is transmitted to the fax/scan device for storage therein, so that the computing device continues to be the master host  
5 . computing device for the fax/scan device as long as the master host identifier is stored in the fax/scan device.

17. The computing device as recited in claim 16, further comprising non-volatile memory that stores the master host identifier.

10

18. The computing device as recited in claim 16, further comprising a user interface wherein a user enters data to configure the fax/scan device in the “Receive Fax to PC” or “Scan-To PC” mode and to designate the computing device as the master host computing device.

15

19. The computing device as recited in claim 16, further comprising one or more ports through which the computing device communicates with the fax/scan device.

20 20. The computing device as recited in claim 16, further comprising a network interface through which the computing device communicates with the fax/scan device via a network.

21. The computing device as recited in claim 16, wherein the  
25 fax/scan driver is further configured to remove the master host computing

device designation and take the fax/scan device out of “Receive Fax to PC” or “Scan-To PC” mode.

22. A fax/scan device, comprising:

5 a processor;

a non-volatile memory;

means for communicating with a network computing device;

a master host identifier stored in the non-volatile memory; and

an operating system configured to detect incoming fax transmissions/

10 scanned data and to transmit the incoming fax transmissions/scanned data to a master host computing device identified by the master host identifier when the fax/scan device is in a “Receive Fax to PC” or “Scan-To PC” mode.

23. The fax/scan device as recited in claim 22, wherein the means for

15 communicating with a network computing device further comprises one or more ports through which the fax/scan device may directly communicate with the network computing device.

24. The fax/scan device as recited in claim 22, wherein the means for

20 communicating with a network computing device further comprises a network interface through which the fax/scan device may indirectly communicate with the network computing device via a network.

25. The fax/scan device as recited in claim 22, further comprising a user interface that may be used to set the fax/scan device to “Receive Fax to PC” or “Scan-To PC” mode.

5 26. The fax/scan device as recited in claim 22, wherein the operating system is further configured to generate and transmit an error message to a computing device other than the master host when that computing device attempts to designate a new master host when the fax/scan device is in “Receive Fax to PC” or “Scan-To PC” mode.

10 27. One or more computer-readable media containing computer-executable instructions that, when executed on a computer, perform the following steps:

15 determining if a fax/scan device is set to a “Receive Fax to PC” or “Scan-To PC” mode;

if the fax/scan device is not set to the “Receive Fax to PC” or “Scan-To PC” mode, generating a master host identifier that uniquely identifies a master host computing device for the fax/scan device that receive fax transmissions sent to the fax device or scanned images from the fax/scan device;

20 storing the master host identifier at the fax/scan device so that fax transmissions/image data received by the fax/scan device will be transmitted to the master host computing device; and

wherein the master host identifier can only be altered by the fax/scan device or by the master host computing device.

25

28. The one or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 27, further comprising the step of receiving a request to set the fax/scan device to the “Receive Fax to PC” or “Scan-To PC” mode.

5 29. The one or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 27, wherein the determining step further comprises:

reading at least a portion of fax/scan device memory to determine if the fax/scan device memory stores a master host identifier; and

if the fax/scan device memory stores a master host identifier,

10 determining that the fax/scan device is set to “Receive Fax to PC” or “Scan-To PC” mode.

30. The one or more computer-readable media instructions as recited in claim 27, wherein the determining step further comprises:

15 reading a value of a master host identifier stored in fax/scan device memory; and

if the master host identifier identifies a non-zero value, determining that the fax/scan device is set to “Receive Fax to PC” or “Scan-To PC” mode.

20 31. The one or more computer-readable media instructions as recited in claim 27, further comprising disabling “Receive Fax to PC” or “Scan-To PC” mode on the fax/scan device by transmitting an instruction to the fax/scan device to clear the master host identifier from fax/scan device memory.

25